January was remarkably mild. It is not very uncommon for one limb to be loſt by a ſphacelus, attended with the ſame ſymptoms, as in theſe caſes; but it is very extraordinary, that a diſorder of this kind ſhould run through a whole family, with ſuch amazing violence and rapidity.

A nurſe, who has lived with them from the beginning of their illneſs, has not been affected. She did not live in the houſe with them before; but uſed to be with them frequently.

LXXXIV. *Extract of a Letter from the Reverend* James Bones, *M. A. Miniſter of* Wattiſham, *near* Stowmarket *in* Suffolk, *to* George Baker, *M. D. F. R. S. relating to the Caſe of Mortification of Limbs in a Family there.*

Read May 6, 1762. THE following hiſtory of the ſufferings of a poor family, in my pariſh of Wattiſham, is as circumſtatially exact as I can give it you.

On Sunday, January 10, Mary, daughter of John and Mary Downing, ſixteen years old, felt a violent pain in her left-leg, which, in an hour or two, affected likewiſe her foot, and particularly her toes. On the next day, her toes were much ſwolen, and black ſpots appeared on them. By degrees, the whole foot became ſwolen, and black. The pain, which was now chiefly in her toes, was, as ſhe ſays, as if dogs

dogs were gnawing her. The blackneſs and ſwelling advanced upwards, by ſlow degrees, till they reached the knee, where the fleſh broke, and a great diſcharge followed. In a little time, the fleſh of her leg putrified, and came off at the ancle, together with the whole foot, leaving the leg-bones bare. Her other foot and leg were affected in a few days, and decayed, nearly by the ſame degrees, and in the ſame manner. She has now an abſceſs formed in one of her thighs.

Mary, the mother, was ſeized, within a few hours of her daughter's firſt ſeizure, with the ſame violent pain under her left foot, or (as ſhe ſometimes ſays) in her left leg. Her toes, foot, and leg, were affected in the ſame manner as her daughter's; and, in a few days, her other foot and leg ſuffered in like manner. The fleſh of one leg has ſeparated, and come off at the knee, leaving the bones bare, which ſhe will not, at preſent, ſuffer to be taken off. The other foot has rotted off at the ancle. Her hands, and a part of her arms, have been, from the firſt attack, without ſenſation; and her fingers have been contracted.

In four or five days after the eldeſt daughter and the mother were firſt affected, Elizabeth, aged fourteen years, Sarah, aged ten, Robert, aged ſix, and Edward, aged four, were all taken, on the ſame day, with violent pains in the feet and legs, chiefly in the left.

Elizabeth was ſeized only in one leg and foot, which, during three weeks, ſhe could not ſet on the ground; but ſtood all that time on the other foot, leaning againſt the chimney: after which, being taken in the ſame manner in the other foot, ſhe was obliged

to lie down. One foot mortified, and came off at the ancle; the other leg near the knee.

Sarah was taken in one foot; which mortified, and came off at the ancle. The other leg ſuffered in the ſame manner, and ſeparated at the knee.

Robert was taken in both feet. His legs have ſeparated at the knees; and he is now in good health.

Edward was taken in both feet, which have ſeparated at the ancle; and he ſeems to be doing well.

An infant, two months old, was taken from the woman's breaſt, as ſoon as ſhe was ſeized with the diſorder. This child was put out to a nurſe, and died in two months. Immediately after death, the feet and hands were obſerved to turn black.

John, the father of this unfortunate family, continued well a fortnight after the wife was ſeized. Then he was ſeized with a violent pain in both his hands. In a ſhort time, his fingers became numb, contracted, and black; the nails came off; and two of the fingers were ulcerated; but are now healing. He has all along complained, at times, of acute, darting pains, through his hands, arms, back, and legs.

The family are all thin, weakly people; but, in general, have been healthy. They have lived (as far as I can learn) juſt as other poor people in the neighbourhood do, having eaten or drunk nothing, which has diſagreed with any of them, except ſome pork and peaſe, on which they dined January 19, the day when the two firſt were ſeized, and which made three of the children ſick at the ſtomach.

The man has two ſons by another wife, who are now in ſervice, and both in good health.

I have always been uſed to read Lucan's deſcription of the effects of the bite of the little ſerpent, called *Seps*, as fabulous, or at leaſt greatly exaggerated; and the rather, becauſe, as far as I know, ſuch an account is to be found in no other author. But I have now been an eye-witneſs to almoſt the whole ſcene of horror, ſo finely painted in the following lines:

——— *Plagæ proxima circum*
Fugit rapta cutis, pallentiaque oſſa retexit:
Membra natant ſanie: ſuræ fluxere: ſine ullo
Tegmine poples erat: femorum quoque muſculus omnis
Liquitur, et nigrâ diſtillant inguina tabe.

LUCAN. Pharſal. Lib. ix. verſ. 767.

Wattiſham,
April 21, 1762.

LXXXV. *Extract of a ſecond Letter from the Rev. Mr.* Bones, *to Dr.* Baker.

Read May 6, 1762.

I Have taken all the pains I can to inform myſelf of every circumſtance, which may be deemed a probable cauſe of the diſeaſe, by which the poor family in my pariſh has been afflicted. But, I fear, I have diſcovered nothing, that will be ſatisfactory to you.

The following is an anſwer to your queries.

Water.] This they have taken out of a ditch, or pool of ſtanding-water, at their own door (as is common in this clay country.) We have no ſpring, or well, in the pariſh.